



WHAT IS IT?

The Commercial Services Plan (CSP) provides the process for establishing the types and levels of commercial activities necessary and/or appropriate for Lassen Volcanic National Park. Commercial activities include concession services, museum association sales, and incidental business permits. The CSP is an implementation plan, establishing the most effective and efficient methods for the National Park Service (NPS) to manage those activities. This plan is developed with public input. The CSP must comply with applicable laws and policies and must be consistent with the management philosophies found in our park General Management Plan (GMP).

WHY ARE WE DOING THIS?

In 1998, Congress passed the NPS Concessions Management Improvement Act (PL 105-391), which guides the management of concessions services by the NPS. By law (36 CFR 5.3), all commercial activities that occur within a unit of the National Park System must be formally authorized. The Concession Management Improvement (CMI) Act mandates that all commercial development and services at all NPS units are both necessary and appropriate to the parks.

Lassen Volcanic National Park has a commercial services management program. Contracts and permits authorizing these commercial services have either expired or will soon. This commercial services plan is an essential step in reviewing existing commercial services to ensure they are still necessary and appropriate. The plan will also consider new services and/or improvements to existing services to achieve the desired future commercial services goals of the park.

HOW COULD THE PLAN AFFECT ME?

The National Park Service is mandated to preserve and protect nationally significant resources while providing for visitor use and enjoyment of the parks. Existing commercial services will be analyzed to ensure they are not causing unacceptable resource degradation. If changes are required to protect resources it could result in changes to how commercial services are conducted or provided.

Resource preservation is a defining goal for the National Park Service. A careful review and study of carrying capacity will determine acceptable commercial service opportunities related to outdoor activities such as guide services that may affect the natural resources.

Visitor safety is also an important goal for the National Park Service. Existing and potentially new commercial services will be analyzed to ensure visitors enjoy the safest experience possible, which could result in changes to how existing services are conducted and provided.

The National Park Service has limited interpretive staff and consequently many opportunities are lost to enhance visitor experience through basic interpretation. The plan will examine ways to work with commercial operators who would provide additional services and information.

The lack of knowledge about the types and quantity of commercial activities allowed in the park, given the park mission to protect natural resources, often affects commercial operators. The law states that all commercial activities in parks must be authorized. A uniform policy consistent with the law will be developed in this planning effort to deal with this situation. This could affect some existing commercial operators in the region.

There are some areas within the park without any commercial services. Analysis could indicate that new services might be warranted which would provide new business opportunities in the region.

Several areas have basic commercial services. An analysis could support that the range and quality of services are appropriate or that opportunities for expansion or enhancement exist, including year-round opportunities.



WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW?

The National Park Service has established a planning team consisting of the Superintendent, senior park management staff, and Regional and Washington Office concession planners. They have established a decision-making framework for the plan based on each park's legislated mandate, mission, and goals. The framework will lead managers through complex deliberations on providing appropriate commercial services while managing and protecting sensitive resources. The framework is presented in this newsletter to assist the public in identifying the boundaries of this planning effort.

The planning team is currently reviewing existing commercial services and facilities, identifying issues and problems, and

developing commercial services goals for each area in Lassen Volcanic National Park. Public input on existing conditions, issues, and goals is being solicited through this newsletter and public open houses.

WHAT'S NEXT?

The public is invited to comment on and/or provide input to the planning framework presented in this newsletter. This is a crucial step in the planning process. It establishes the basis for the plan. Alternatives considered and decisions made must comply with the criteria developed in the framework. Some elements of the framework are not negotiable. The National Park Service must comply with the laws that established the park and other applicable laws. The commercial services goals for the park are flexible and should be redefined periodically to reflect current conditions in the park and surrounding communities. Just a reminder, however – all elements must comply with the laws and mandates that govern the park.

The National Park Service uses a "Goal Driven" planning process. Essentially we determine where we are now, where do we want to be, and how do we get there. If a proposal or action does not achieve the goals of where we want to be in the future it is not approved. That is why goal development at this step in the process is so important.

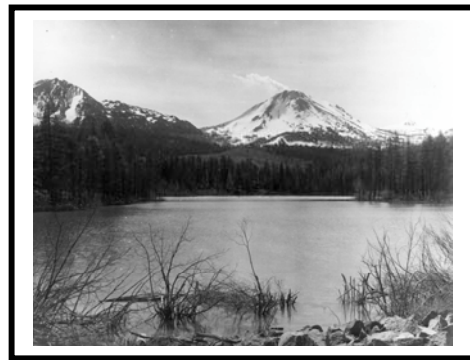
After the framework is developed with public input, alternatives will be developed and an impact analysis conducted (this plan is subject to the National Environmental Policy Act – NEPA). A draft plan will be released for public review and comment. Appropriate comments will be incorporated and a final plan will be published. The entire process with opportunities for public input identified is presented in the process and schedule table in this newsletter.

HOW CAN YOU BECOME INVOLVED?

You can help the National Park Service by getting involved early in the process. Your input at this time will help develop a plan that is responsive to the needs and desires of park management, the visiting public, local communities, and the local business community.

The public is encouraged to review this document to better understand the planning framework limits and constraints and to offer comments on the direction of the plan. To make this process work, and to ensure that the public's views and concerns are addressed, we need your comments, feedback and participation in the upcoming scoping meeting.

You can send us your comments and/or suggestions via e-mail, regular mail, or dropping them off at Park Headquarters in Mineral. The park address is Lassen Volcanic National Park, P.O. Box 100, Mineral, CA 96063. The e-mail address is lavo_superintendent@nps.gov. You can also join our mailing list to receive future newsletters and relevant information providing updates on the planning process.



Commercial Services Plan Process and Schedule

STEP	ACTIVITY	PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES
1	Project Scoping – Planning framework (laws, mandates, mission, goals, issues) developed. (Summer 2002)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Read newsletter and send in your comments ■ Attend public open house
2	Develop and Evaluate Alternatives – Develop a reasonable range of alternatives consistent with planning framework. The potential consequences of each alternative will be evaluated. (Fall 2002)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Read newsletter and send in your comments
3	Prepare and Publish Draft Commercial Services Plan/Environmental Assessment -- The draft plan will describe the planning issues, management alternatives (including a preferred), and impacts. (Winter/Spring 2002/2003)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Read draft plan and send us your comments ■ Participate in public meetings
4	Document Decisions and Publish Final Plan – The draft plan will be revised based on public comments, further analysis, and additional information. A final plan will be distributed. (Summer/Fall 2003)	
5	Implementation – Implementation of the plan will begin. (Fall 2003)	

COMMERCIAL SERVICES PLAN PLANNING FRAMEWORK

Lassen Volcanic NP
National Park Service
Department of Interior



PARK PURPOSE –Why does the Park exist?

Lassen Volcanic National Park was established by an Act of Congress on August 9, 1916 “for recreation purposes by the public and for the preservation from injury or spoliation of all timber, mineral deposits and natural curiosities or wonders within said park and their retention in their natural condition...and provide against the wanton destruction of the fish and game found within said park and against their capture or destruction...”. Incorporated into the park were Cinder Cone and Lassen Peak National Monuments, which were established by Presidential Proclamations on May 6, 1907 as part of the Lassen Peak Forest Reserve.

PARK SIGNIFICANCE – Why is the Park so special?

Lassen Volcanic National Park is an outstanding example of a dynamic geologic landscape and is of unquestioned national significance. Lassen Peak erupted over a six-year period between 1914 and 1921. Preserved within the park is the site of the most recent volcanic eruption within the continental United States, prior to the Mount Saint Helens eruption in May, 1980.

Lassen Peak is one of the largest plug dome volcanoes in the world. The park is unique in that it also preserves, in a relatively small geographic area, examples of the three other types of volcanoes recognized by geologists: shield volcanoes, composite volcanoes, and cinder cones.

Within the park is the most extensive, intact network of geothermal resources west of Yellowstone National Park, including

outstanding examples of boiling springs, mudpots, and fumaroles.

In 1972 Congress designated 75% of the park (78,982 acres) as the Lassen Volcanic Wilderness. Appropriate recreation on lands managed for wilderness values include such activities as hiking, backpacking, horseback riding and fishing.

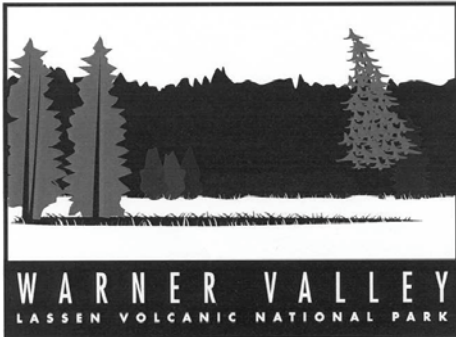
The park preserves nationally significant cultural resources including 84 historic buildings that are on the List of Classified Structures, over 70 Native American archeological sites, and portions of the Nobles Emigrant Trail.

MISSION GOALS – WHAT ARE WE PLANNING FOR?

Consistent with the mission of the National Park Service, the Commercial Services Plan will seek to enhance the following goals:

- That the natural and cultural resources and associated values are protected, restored, and maintained in good condition and managed within their broader ecosystems and cultural contexts.
- That the NPS contributes to knowledge about natural and cultural resources and associated values, and that management decisions about resources and visitors are based on adequate scholarly and scientific information.
- That visitors understand, appreciate, and are inspired by the park’s historical and natural resources, and that they support the protection of these resources.

- That available park facilities, infrastructure, and services are sufficient to support operational needs, park staff, and visitors.



Commerical Services Goals

The following goals are specific to commercial services:

- Lassen Volcanic National Park has the staff, funding, and management tools to allow efficient and effective management of the commercial services program.
- All visitors are aware of being in a National Park and what the mission of the park is.
- Lassen Volcanic National Park is able to manage the impact of all authorized and unauthorized commercial activity in the park.
- All commercial recreational activities are compatible with the resources of the area.
- All commercial providers in the park are aware of and participate in the mission of Lassen Volcanic National Park.
- A high level of quality exists for all commercial facilities and services.
- Access to compatible recreational activities is provided.
- Continue to work with park partners to provide compatible commercial recreational activities and services that enhance visitor experience.

ISSUES – OBSTACLES TO ACHIEVING GOALS

Issues must be addressed in the planning process to ensure the accomplishment of stated goals.

The following is a preliminary list of issues developed by the planning team:

Operations – As a result of government budget tightening staffing has been reduced. It is becoming increasingly difficult to manage the commercial services program with the limited staff available. It is also difficult to maintain government owned commercial facilities.

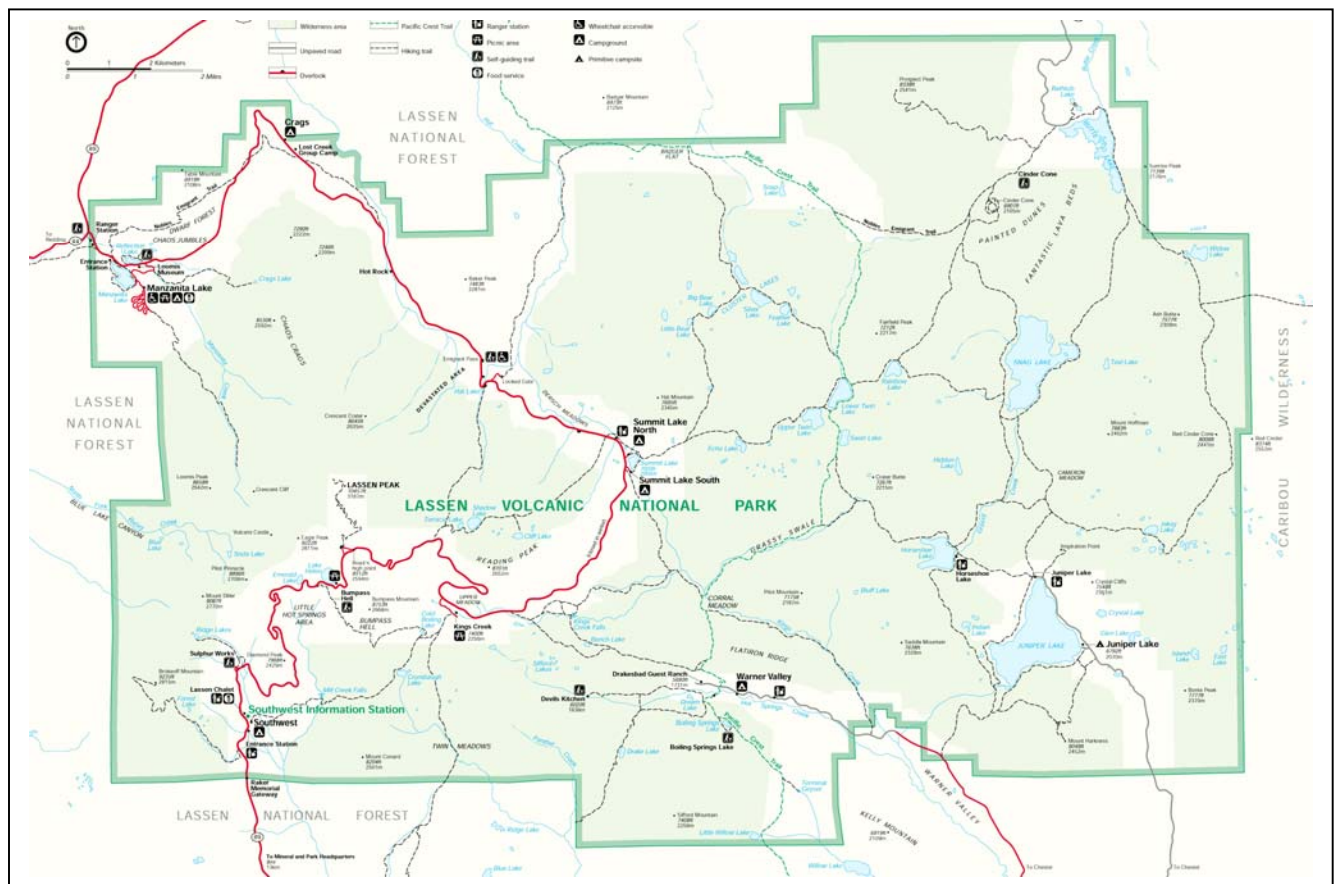
Unauthorized Commercial Activity – The law requires all commercial activities in parks to be authorized by a permit, contract, or some written agreement. Some unauthorized commercial activity is occurring. Factors that contribute to this situation include lack of knowledge of NPS regulations and inability of the limited park staff to monitor unauthorized activity.

Interpretation – A goal of the park is to enhance the visitor's appreciation of the park resources and the mission of the NPS. With limited staffing the National Park Service must explore new ways to interpret the park including training commercial operators who have contact with visitors.

Air Tour Operators – Legislation exists concerning management of commercial services involving air tours in National Parks. Local operators are not currently managed through a permit system.

Facilities – Are support facilities such as parking areas, restrooms, roads, trails and utilities adequate and depending on their location who should maintain them?

New Services – There is a need for a process to evaluate new commercial services in the park to determine if they are necessary and/or appropriate. New services could include refreshments at major trail heads, food and beverage services, vending machines, emergency towing and locksmith services, horseback riding, kayaking instruction and guiding, fishing guides, mountaineering guides, natural history seminars, photography seminars, tour bus guides, bicycle touring, youth/ elderhostel activities, and ecotours.



COMMERCIAL SERVICES PLAN PUBLIC COMMENT RESPONSE FORM

Lassen Volcanic NP
National Park Service
Department of Interior



The Lassen Volcanic National Park Commercial Services Plan (CSP) will identify the types and levels of commercial services that are consistent with protection of park resources and a quality visitor experience. Only commercial services that comply with the mandates for the park and contribute to achieving the goals for the park will be authorized. Newsletter #1 presented the planning framework being developed for this CSP. While the mandates, purpose, and significance of the park are fixed the goals and issues for the park are subject to some interpretation. Your responses to the following questions will ensure that the perceptions of everyone associated with Lassen Volcanic National Park are considered in this planning effort.

YOUR FEEDBACK IS IMPORTANT!

Enclose additional sheets if needed.

1. What do you especially value or have concerns about in the park, given the mandated purpose of the park?
2. In your vision of the park 10 years from now, what visitor activities would occur and what commercial services would be offered to support those activities?
3. How would the services identified above fulfill the mission of the park?
4. Do you have any ideas, issues, or concerns about this planning process that you would like the planning team to address?

CONTACT: Karen A. Stoll, Chief of Administration, Lassen Volcanic National Park, (530) 595-4444, extension 5140 or e-mail lavo_superintendent@nps.gov.

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HOW TO USE THIS RESPONSE FORM

Use this response form to let us know what you think about the proposed Lassen Volcanic National Park's Commercial Services Plan. You can express your interests and concerns by answering the comment questions on the reverse side of this form. Feel free to make additional comments on separate sheets of paper and enclose them with this form. Please tape the open edges and affix first class postage. You may also drop off your comments at the Mineral headquarters, or the public open houses in August. You may e-mail your comments to ***lavo_superintendent@nps.gov***. If you or anyone you know would like to be added to our mailing list and receive future updates on the planning process, please fill out the following:

Please print or attach an address label below

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____



COMMERCIAL SERVICES PLAN August 2002

Dear Friends,

The National Park Service is developing a Commercial Services Plan for Lassen Volcanic National Park. The plan will identify necessary and appropriate commercial services in the park and the best way for the National Park Service to manage them. At this stage of the process the planning team is developing the framework from which all decisions will be made. Your input at this time is extremely important.

Lassen Volcanic National Park has its own legislative mandate which cannot be changed except by an act of Congress. From that mandate the purpose of the park is established and the significant natural and cultural resources for which the park was created to protect are identified. These factors dictate how the area will be managed. The National Park Service develops long and short-term mission goals that ensure all management actions comply with these factors.

Commercial activities must also comply with these factors and contribute to accomplishment of the goals of the park. They must also comply with the overall National Park Service mandate to preserve and protect the significant resources of a park while making them reasonably available for the use and enjoyment of the visiting public.

The accompanying newsletter presents, for your review and comment, the draft planning framework that will be used to develop the Lassen Volcanic National Park Commercial Services Plan. It presents the mandates, purpose, and significance as well as a preliminary list of issues and goals for the park. I invite you to review these mandates, purpose, and significance and provide comment on the planning team's initial list of issues and goals. This is your opportunity to ensure the planning framework reflects the perspectives of everyone associated with Lassen Volcanic National Park.

You have several options to participate. You may mail your comments on the enclosed response form or drop them off at the Mineral Headquarters. Copies of this document and the comment form will be posted on the park's web site: www.nps.gov/lavo. You are also cordially invited to an open house where you can meet with the planning team to discuss your comments, questions, and concerns relevant to the commercial services planning effort. The open houses will run from 7:00pm to 8:30pm and will be held:

August 19	Chico, Municipal Center Council Chamber, 421 Main Street
August 20	Redding, Civic Center Community Room, 777 Cypress Avenue
August 21	Red Bluff, Community/Senior Center Conference Room, 1500 S. Jackson Street
August 22	Chester, Memorial Hall, 225 Gay Street

We look forward to your input on this key park planning document.

Sincerely,

Marilyn H. Parris
Superintendent
Lassen Volcanic National Park

